

**UTILIZING FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN
MEANINGFUL WRITING**

**A
PROJECT**

**Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks**

**in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of**

MASTER OF ARTS

By Bradley Webster, B.A.

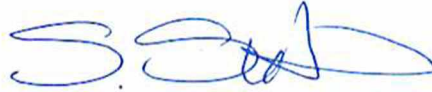
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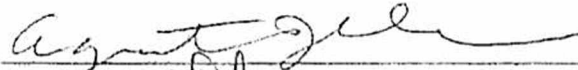
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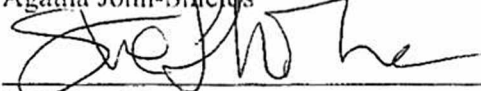
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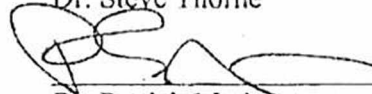
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Utilizing Funds of Knowledge to Engage Students in Meaningful Writing

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MASTERS PROJECT TEACHER GUIDE STUDENT EXAMPLES THEORY MORE...

ANE CALL Masters Project

Welcome! During the 2014/2015 school year, I implemented this project in my 2nd grade classroom. Teachers are welcome to use the information found on the Teacher Guide page. I have included information to help you get started in your classroom.

If you are interested in language development, please look through the information located on the theory page. I have written about Multiliteracies, Available Designs, Designing, The Redesigned, Funds of Knowledge, Output, and Digital media.

To find out more about my teaching context and the grant funded program that I have been involved in, please click on the link below.

Thank you!



Project Rationale

Community

Nunapitchuk, Alaska is located in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. It is one of the “Tundra Villages” located near Bethel, the nearest hub. The population according to the 2013 census is 518 people. There are approximately 180 students enrolled in the school during the 2014/2015 school year.

Due to the nature of the tundra terrain, travel can be limited. During the summer and fall, travel in and out of the village is possible by plane and boat to surrounding villages and Bethel. In the winter months, planes and snowmachines are the preferred method of travel. Students travel to school in a variety of ways during the year. Many walk, ride bikes, use a boat, ride a snowmachine or in a sled, or drive a 4-wheeler.

Employment opportunities are limited in the community. The school and city office positions provide many jobs, as does the store. Many families rely on fishing for income as well as for food throughout the year. Subsistence is a major way of life. Subsistence activities practiced by community members include berry picking, bird hunting, moose hunting, salmon fishing, ice fishing, and seal hunting.

There are two churches in the community, the Moravian Church and the Russian Orthodox Church. Both are well received and attended on a regular basis. The Moravian Church has programs for the youth and occasionally hosts regional gatherings for singing. The community and school work together to ensure that the church schedule is acknowledged when possible so that there are not any conflicts.

Language Status

Language dynamics in Nunapitchuk can be complex. The language spoken in most homes is Central Alaskan Yup'ik, often called Yugtun. This is also the predominant language used in the community to conduct business and for social interactions. While purchasing food at the store or ordering food at the restaurant, people use Yugtun. It is also the language used to make announcements over VHF radio. Feasts and gatherings in homes are other examples of how the language maintains its status in the community.

But, school instruction is in English. In the past, there have been bilingual programs taught in school, but the current language program is limited in instructional time during the week. As a result, most students are bilingual with Yugtun being their first language and English as their second language. Even though many students are fluent speakers of their first language, few are able to read and write in Yugtun.

Elders are always welcome into the school and are viewed as valuable cultural and language resources. When they come into classrooms, they will give address students in their first language, Yugtun. This is another example of a context where language choice is obvious. Talking about cultural traditions or delivering important words of wisdom about the environment can only be truly meaningful in Yugtun.

English is rarely used in church services and church functions. During weddings and funerals, Yugtun is given precedence over English. Both languages

are used, but English is often used to accommodate participating teachers or as a way of paraphrasing what was just said in Yugtun.

School District

The school in Nunapitchuk is called Anna Tobeluk Memorial School and is part of the Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD). There are 28 different schools that are part of LKSD. Many of the language programs being used are implemented to meet the local needs and wishes of each individual community. Some communities have strong language programs taught in the school because of a desire to revive language use in the community. Others are using language programs to maintain language that is already existent in the home. And some sites choose to teach only English and give responsibility to the community to give language instruction.

The current language program being used by many sites according to the district is Dual Language. Baker (2011) notes the difference between Dual Language and Heritage Language instruction. Dual Language schools aim to bring a balance of two different linguistic backgrounds. Heritage Language on the other hand aims to preserve the native language along with the strengthening the culture.

The mission statement of LKSD says,

The mission of the Lower Kuskokwim School District is to ensure bilingual, culturally appropriate and effective education for all students, thereby providing them with the opportunity to be responsible, productive citizens. (

Dual Language is one of the ways that the school district ensures that bilingual education is taken seriously and that cultural standards are met. Bilingual

programs and Yup'ik language instruction has been possible in LKSD as a result of the Native American Languages Act (NALA). Shiffman (1998) highlights that this Act emphasizes language survival and the right to use Native American Languages in schools. Yup'ik language maintenance has been strong in many communities in LKSD. The district has worked to ensure that school programs are not hurting local language development. Despite national pressures to teach only English because of testing, LKSD has used bilingual education to provide a well rounded education to students. Another provision in NALA (1990) states that

There is convincing evidence that student achievement and performance, community and school pride, and educational opportunity is clearly and directly tied to respect for, and support of, the first language of the child or student.

By choosing to endorse bilingual programs, the district is supporting this statement and showing what ideologies they believe.

School

Anna Tobeluk Memorial School has approximately 180 students enrolled in kindergarten through high school. Currently there are 13 certified teachers with 8 support staff filling roles. A majority of the certified teachers speak English as their first language while the support staff are local and speak Yup'ik as their first language.

The mission statement of the school says,

The mission of Anna Tobeluk Memorial School is to continually promote excellence in education with a goal of high school graduation by maintaining

a partnership between parents, school, and community, and integrating the unique cultural and language aspects of the community and region into the school system.

Until recent years, bilingual education was a part of the school climate in Nunapitchuk. Students were instructed in Yup'ik from kindergarten through second grade following a transitional bilingual model. Baker (2011) describes this type of education as a weak model. By design, it works toward producing strong English speakers. The intent of LKSD was to give students an educational base in Yup'ik that would help to strengthen first language fluency enough to be maintained in the home.

When No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was enacted, the community and local school board realized that testing requirements and yearly progress were going to be assessed in English. To ensure that students were successful in this type of setting, the decision was made to switch to English only. Since that switch, the language program has gone through changes. For several years, students in kindergarten through 5th grade still received 30 minutes a day of Yup'ik language instruction. For the last two years, the language program has been scaled back even more. Currently, kindergarten through 5th grade receive 30 minutes of language instruction per week. High school students have the option of taking a Yup'ik language class as an elective that meets for one hour a day. These changes have happened as a result of mounting pressure to meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP) under NCLB.

The kindergarten teacher has had a big job as a result of these changes. Since the language of the community is Yugtun and the language of the school is English, there is a period of adjustment that is needed. Some students have enrolled in school without speaking English or having a very limited vocabulary.

The support staff in the school are there to help students succeed in school and are an example of the mission statement being put into practice. Their job is often viewed as aiding in meeting curriculum standards or helping with discipline problems. These individuals are also situated in a unique way to be able to provide language support for students that struggle, helping them make connections with something that they know but may not be confident in how to articulate in English.

NCLB ideology appears to be that English is the language that should be used for teaching in the United States. This ideology has permeated the local school. Whenever a decision is made to move away from traditional language use toward English language use, the belief that English is *the* language of instruction gets stronger.

Choices to focus on English are often done to show compliance with federal and state mandates about how much progress should be shown. Anna Tobeluk School is currently the lowest performing school in the district according to the Adequate School Progress Improvement (ASPI) score. As a result of being a priority school, additional pressure is given to show how administration is going to bring about positive change.

Wyman (2012) talks about a school in LKSD that she calls Piniq. This school goes through a language shift as a result of bilingual education changes. These

changes occurred as a result of the administration's ideology about language instruction and its importance. It is also important to recognize that these same types of changes may occur as a result of state mandates and testing requirements that do not understand or take into account the ideologies of the communities that they are impacting.

In light of all of this information, I view my role as a teacher differently. I was like many other teachers and administrators. I knew some things about the language and felt that I was supporting its development even though English was being promoted in my classroom.

Seeing that language development is important to the region where I work and in the community where I live drives me to want to make a difference and support Yugtun speakers in whatever ways that I can as a non-Yugtun speaker. My project aims at accomplishing this task. It is difficult to promote a language that is being overpowered by English when English is all you know. But by seeing myself as a teacher and a learner and by showing interest in my students, I hope that they will continue to use their first language in meaningful ways.

I have noticed that my students are more confident and excited when they are encouraged to speak in Yugtun. This excitement is what I hope to harness by allowing students to have peer interactions in the classroom in the language of their choice. I also hope that students will interact with their parents and other community members in the language that is most meaningful for them. By doing this, I believe that they will be able to learn in meaningful ways. This learning will

help support the mission of the district to provide students with the opportunity to be responsible, productive citizens.

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A Literature Review

It started with a question. What can I do to help my students write? I wanted to be a good teacher that created meaningful lessons for my students and to do so in a way that valued their culture, community, and families. The school asked students to learn and produce material in English even though most spoke another language, Yugtun, at home. Here is the crux. While working in a monolingual school, I was required to teach bilingual students in a monolingual way. This seemed to me to devalue the language and knowledge of the community. Going back to my question regarding my role in helping my students write, I wanted to find a way to value students' home language at the same time as I taught them to write productively in English.

My project incorporated writing to peer pen pals in another state. The students were given homework to accomplish with a family member. I asked my class to take a picture of themselves according to a prompt, such as taking a picture of themselves playing a game or doing an activity with their family. Their homework was to send me a text message with the picture and two sentences describing what they are doing. During writing class, they would use what was sent as a starting point for a pen pal letter. Students worked for a class period to develop the letter. When their letter was done, they would read it to a partner to make sure that it was correct and ready to send.

As I began to form a plan for how I was going to do this, I thought about the things that I had learned as I prepared to become a teacher and the professional development that I've been involved in to become a better teacher. I'd taken classes on literacy and learned strategies for helping English language learners. I'd done research on language development and read literature associated with how language is learned. Combining what

I knew, I formed my project around some foundational concepts. Throughout this paper, my goal is to explain key concepts and terms and how they connect with my thinking as I designed lessons for my students.

Some of the terms that I will use and explain in the upcoming pages are the following: Funds of Knowledge, Multiliteracies, Available Designs, Designing, Redesigned, Output Hypothesis, and Digital Media.

Funds of Knowledge

In my school setting, there is a divide between the school and many of the families in the community. Teachers and school staff often feel that there is little or no support from families. At the same time, families view school workers as the experts of education. When something doesn't make sense to them or information isn't communicated, both sides can feel undervalued. One way to improve the relationship between schools and communities is by incorporating funds of knowledge into instruction. Doing this can show families that the knowledge they possess is important and vital to the learning of the children in the community and in the school. "There is much teachers do not know about their student or families that could be immediately helpful in the classroom" (Moll et al., 1992, p.136). Understanding what goes on in the home and what values are held by family members can inform instruction in ways that simply looking at state standards can not do.

At the beginning of the year, I would leave writing class very discouraged. I prepared for the year by planning lessons and looking at the content standards for the state of Alaska. I expected my students to have left first grade prepared to begin writing at an appropriate level, but this was not the case. Getting students to write anything down was a

struggle. I tried different methods with little visible success. Writing prompts didn't motivate, sentence starters were copied without thought, four-square activities didn't produce the writing that I was looking for. I brainstormed writing topics with the class and wrote word webs on the board, but continued to observe only minimal interest at best and writing skills remained poor.

As I started my project, I thought about what it would look like to have students write about themselves. As I reflected on what I'd learned about Funds of Knowledge, I thought that this approach might help. I asked them write about themselves and their families in a way that was different from our normal writing classes. Instead of just sitting down with pencil and paper and asking them to start writing, I decided to give them homework before they could begin. I asked them to take a picture of themselves in relation to a prompt. For example, they were asked to take a picture of themselves at their house. After taking the picture, they were expected to talk with a family member about the picture and then text me their picture along with two sentences about it. Over the course of the week, we would go through the process of describing the picture, writing a draft letter to a pen pal, and revising for a final draft that would be sent. Why did I do this? Because they knew about their house. It was motivating to them to be able to tell about something that was familiar to them and that they knew about. I didn't have to tell them about their house, they got to tell me.

It is easy as an educator to get caught up with lesson plans, lesson objectives, standards, assessments, and learning outcomes. A focus can thus be placed on the learning that happens at school and forget about or trivialize the learning that takes place in the home. When an educator consciously or unconsciously ignores the funds of knowledge

available, they take the stance that the only learning that can happen is going to happen in the classroom. Moll et al. (1992) describe funds of knowledge as “historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for households or individual functioning and well-being” (p.133). We as teachers need to look into the community and recognize the knowledge that exists in the homes.

Funds of knowledge place an “emphasis on strategic knowledge and related activities essential in households’ functioning, development, and well being.” (Moll et al. 1992, p. 139). My other prompts also related to things that the students already knew. By taking a picture of something they knew or something they were doing, they were able to share with me a part of their lives that I didn’t know before. In doing this, I tried to communicate to them and their families that the knowledge contained within the community and family system is valued and can contribute to what is happening in the school.

The New London Group (1996) says, “Classroom teaching and curriculum have to engage with students’ own experiences and discourses, which are increasingly defined by cultural and subcultural diversity and the different language backgrounds and practices that come with this diversity” (p. 88). Another way that I look at this is through the definition of success. When a teacher sets curriculum goals and expectations, they define success as the meeting of those goals. Families who have different language backgrounds and funds of knowledge than the teacher may define success differently. Success may be measured by the way they display cultural knowledge. They may be successful through knowledge of the land or their ability to contribute to the family system through hunting, gathering, or cooking.

As students spoke with a parent or family member about their picture, I also encouraged them to have those conversations in the language of their choice. If they wanted to speak in Yugtun because that was the language used at home, great. If they wanted to speak with their family in Village English, that was encouraged as well. I just wanted them to talk before writing so that they could have a starting point and make connections between the picture and what they were going to write on the page. Additionally, complex oral language use, or talking through what you want to write, helps to develop literacy and writing abilities while connecting to everyday use of spoken language.

Multiliteracies

In order to understand the literature a bit more, I want to lay a foundation for why I believe Multiliteracies is an important term to understand and one that applies to my rural Alaska teaching context. Reading and writing has changed. The way that reading and writing were taught and practiced by the parents and grandparents of my students is different than the way that students learn today. Allow me to make comparison. Reading was done with a book, or to go back in time beyond living generations, a stone tablet or sheet of papyrus. Thanks to advances in technology, students can now read on a tablet, but not one made out of stone. Tablets and computers can contain volumes of multimodal texts without the bulk of a tangible library. Writing also has changed. The tools used to write by parents and grandparents remain, but are only a small portion of the tools that can be used in classrooms today. My students still use pencil and paper, but they use them in conjunction with computers, electronic tablets, images, text messages, and email.

So the skills and abilities associated with literacy that students need today are new and different from what literacy meant prior to the incorporation of technology. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) got to the point when they ask the question, “What have we been doing differently in literacy teaching over the past ten years?”(p.16). I had to stop and read that question again so that it would sink in. I began thinking about what literacy instruction looked like at my school ten years ago. I also thought about what it would look like in ten more years if patterns continued. What are we preparing our students for?

This is an issue that teachers and schools need to address in order to guide students in learning the skills they need to be successful members of society within their communities. Students need to learn to read and write for a variety of contexts. Writing a text message requires different skills than writing a resume. Finding information in a textbook can be different than finding information on a website or an Internet search. “Thus the demand is to re-examine what being literate means today” (Healy, 2008, p.6).

Language skills also vary depending on the context and content. Understanding language used in classrooms requires a different skill set than being able to carry on a conversation at the store. Language used at church might be different than the way someone communicates at home.

Multimodal and Multilingual

This look at literacy begins to get at what Cope and Kalantzis (2009) talk about with the terms Multimodal and Multilingual. They use Multimodal to describe the various modes that contribute to making meaning: written language, oral language, visual, audio, tactile, gestural, and special representation. “Traditionally, literacy teaching has confined

itself to the forms of written language” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 12). For students today, there is an opportunity to make meaning in a variety of ways beyond written language. My class incorporated visual pictures with their writing to convey meaning. The latter, combined with the picture and the type of language that the students use, is an example of this.

The term Multilingual is particularly important within my teaching context. As teachers, we are being asked to use and highlight Academic English more and more. This is especially true of teachers that have special training for working with English Language Learners. Academic English (or vocabulary) includes the terms that are specific to that content area and may not be a part of everyday conversation. Multilingual sounds like a term that includes multiple languages, and it is in part. Being fluent in more than one language is a goal that many people think about. The other way to look at this term is being fluent in different varieties or dialects within a language.

Standard American English (SAE) is what curriculum guides are based off of and the variety of English expected in formal educational settings. Where I live and teach, SAE is not the way that people talk in the broader community. Students are bilingual, speaking English and Yugtun, and they often speak a variety of English known as Village English (VE) which is distinct from SAE. The Multilingual dimension of Multiliteracies addresses the need to be able to make meaning from the various ways that language is used, from different languages, variations within the language, and language use that is specific to a certain topic. As my students go through their project, they will likely have conversations at home in Yugtun or Village English. I encourage that because it helps them develop an understanding of what they want to communicate in the home language that they are most

familiar with. I continue their learning by helping them to revise their writing in Standard American English to more closely align with standards and expectations, but also so that their pen pals can understand what they are trying to say.

When the New London Group got together in 1996, they coined the term *multiliteracies*. “Multiliteracies, according to the authors, overcomes the limitations of traditional approaches by emphasizing how negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society is central to the pragmatics of the working, civic, and private lives of students” (New London Group, 1996, p. 60). Due to societal changes and new technologies becoming more and more accessible, they recognized a need for students to be literate in new ways. It was no longer sufficient to be literate with just the printed word on a page. Simply teaching traditional literacy, grammar and how to read text on a page, is not enough. “One must know how to navigate nonlinear text, repeatedly evaluate resources, sift through extraneous materials, infer meaning, and use a range of features to compose unified messages” (Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012, p. 289).

Throughout the rest of this paper, I aim to explain three more key elements of multiliteracies pedagogy: Available Designs, Designing, and The Redesigned. I will make connections between these terms and research, as well as showing how these elements inform my project. Before beginning, it may help to quickly preview what these terms mean.

“The Multiliteracies view of design has three aspects: Available Designs (found representational forms); the Designing one does (the work you do when you make meaning, how you appropriate and revoice and transform Available Designs); and

The Redesigned (how, through the act of Designing, the world and the person are transformed).” (Cope & Kalantzis 2009, p. 10)

Available Designs

A pedagogy of Multiliteracies starts with a focus on meanings. “Available Designs are the found or discernable patterns and conventions of representation” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009 p. 10). They go on to explain that meaning making happens through different modes, genres and discourses (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). When I think in terms of a classroom, Available Designs are the resources often provided or made accessible by the teacher that the student uses to make meaning. Books, articles, pictures, and videos can all be Available Designs.

For example, the letters that my students receive from their pen pals are forms of Available Designs. They are a resource that is used to make meaning. But resources without background knowledge are not complete in the meaning making process. Funds of Knowledge, presented earlier, connects to this idea. What the students bring with them into the classroom, their knowledge about themselves and the world, helps them to make meaning from the letters in front of them. I chose this method of writing to pen pals because my students get the opportunity to hear about experiences of other students that they may not have the opportunity to learn about otherwise. I wanted them to realize that students in other parts of the country experience school and life in ways that are different from what they know.

My class also has a unique voice and perspective that can be shared with others. Not only are the letters from our pen pals Available Designs in our meaning making, but as the

project continues, the letters that we write and send to them become Available Designs for their class. Our pen pals get an opportunity to learn about something new. They would not be able to really understand the meaning of my students' idea of home, but when they see a picture and read a letter about it, they have new resources available to them. My class can help foster that learning by identifying valuable aspects of who they are and sharing that with others.

Designing

“Designing is the act of doing something with the available designs of meaning, be that communicating to others or representing the world to oneself or others’ representations of it” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 11). This is the processing stage in the understanding of material. “Designing transforms knowledge in producing new constructions and representations of reality” (New London Group, 1996, p.76). As students have access to information and then begin to internalize it and develop meaning from it, they are designing. The designing process can be done individually or with a group of learners. I find cooperative learning strategies (Kagan, 2009) to be helpful for students as they are designing and making meaning from the Available Designs (materials) they have access to. For example, students talked with each other to share ideas about the prompt, they worked together to write down ideas shared by their partner, and they summarized information to share with the class. By working with others, students engage in the collaborative process of Design in new ways and they see how others process the Available Designs and make meaning from them.

Output

Through Designing activities, students are working together toward making meaning. One way to do this is through Output. Swain (2000) argues that Output is foundational in developing language skills. This is done through speaking and writing to meet an objective or a goal. “Learners need to do something” (Swain, 2000, p. 99).

This is important in terms of Designing. Students are making meaning through doing something. One aspect of the homework that I emphasized with my class was that they needed to talk (Output) to someone at home when they took their picture and then write (Output) about their picture in their text message. This is an aspect of language development that was important to me during this stage of the project. I recognized that many of my students speak another language at home, Yugtun. I encouraged them and their parents to have conversations in the language of their choice. I had observed students helping their peers clarify things in class by saying them in Yugtun. Once this was done, the connection to how it is said in English was often made. I wanted to give parents and families an opportunity to value their language use and help to make the connection to how it is said in SAE. By producing output in this way, students have multiple ways of making meaning.

During the project, I questioned whether this was helping my students in practical ways. It sounded good in the research, but I wondered if it really made a difference. Then something happened in class. It wasn’t much, but it was significant to me. I asked a student who had done their homework what they had talked about with their family, and I got the answer that teachers hear often, “I don’t know.” I was discouraged. This student had done the homework and appeared to have followed directions, but the learning

outcomes weren't matching up with my expectations. As I continued on, I showed the student their picture and asked them again if they remembered what they talked about at home. When they saw the picture, their face lit up. "Oh yeah, now I remember." They were then able to tell me almost exactly what had been texted to me with the picture. This example helped reinforce that the conversations at home were helping students make connections between their picture and what they could write.

The Redesigned

The last stage in the Multiliteracies framework is The Redesigned. "The outcome of designing is a new meaning, something through which meaning makers remake themselves" (New London Group, 1996, p. 76). Cope and Kalantzis (2009) look at this as the stage where learning has happened. A transformation happens when the material is accessed, processed, and then learned. At this stage, there can be a new Available Design produced. New materials can be created that illustrate understanding and can then be used by other learners as they go through the cycle.

The cycle can be illustrated through a vocabulary activity. I used this activity as a mini lesson when there were new vocabulary words that we needed to incorporate into our writing. The words that students originally have access to would represent the Available Designs. They worked with a partner to understand the meaning of the new word and tried to think of how to use it in a sentence, through this process, they were designing something new and different than just the words available. To complete the lesson, students created a Comic Life page that illustrated the word through pictures and included an example of the word in a sentence. This redesigned material was presented to

the rest of the class as an example of what was learned, but also became an available design for them to make their own meaning and learning from.

Digital Media

In order to discuss digital media, it is important to be clear about what digital media is. There has been a considerable amount of research done on how technology can be used for instruction in the classroom and for language learning in particular, but an all inclusive definition of digital media is harder to specify. As technology continues to evolve, there will continue to be new ways for people to access, use, and create information. When using the term digital media for this context, it will be sufficient to describe it as technology that can be used to support the learning objectives in the classroom. Examples could include Internet resources, computer programs, websites, apps, games, or smart phones.

When looking at the reasons why technology is a powerful tool in learning, it can be easy to perceive technology as the answer to teacher struggles. I've been fortunate to have computers and iPads as classroom supplies for many years. Other teachers have often commented how lucky I am to have this technology in my class. While I can't disagree that I am fortunate to be able to use these things, they in and of themselves don't do anything. It isn't until a student picks up an iPad and uses it in connection with learning that it becomes a tool. Schools and teachers can spend a lot of time and money investing in technology that claims to be the answer to educational woes. But when technology isn't used correctly or with purpose, it just becomes a distraction from learning.

I chose to have students use smart phones with cameras because I believed that it would help students as they spoke and wrote. I didn't anticipate how difficult it would be

for so many families to navigate this process. I made the false assumption that all or most of the students knew someone at home who used a smart phone. I also assumed that people had the ability to send their pictures to me via text messaging. Because of these difficulties, the use of this technology hindered the learning goals at first. I had very few pictures submitted for the first homework assignment, but that number increased by the last assignment. Through conversations with parents and consistent newsletters and reminders, I believe parents became more comfortable trying something new when they better understood why I was asking them to do the homework.

In classroom learning as well as language learning, it is important to consider what technology is and what it is not. Villa (2002) says, "Computers cannot become a surrogate for one generation of minority language speakers passing that tongue to subsequent generations" (p. 97). It is true that computers can help in language revitalization efforts, but that does not replace the need for fluent speakers to pass down their language and knowledge to their children and grandchildren. According to Villa (2002), when computers are used in an appropriate way, authentic materials can be preserved through recordings of oral histories by fluent speakers of a minority language. To be clear, technology is a tool that can be used in many productive ways.

There are ways that digital media can be used to benefit language learners. Indigenous languages are receiving renewed attention through a focus on revitalization and preservation. The use of English has overrun many minority languages that have few fluent speakers. Digital media can be used to connect speakers who are spread out and may not have other ways of interacting with interlocutors. It can also provide opportunities for authentic language to be produced and recorded. By that, I mean that the

language being used is meaningful has real application for speakers and listeners. Speakers cannot simply rely on these recordings to pass along language and knowledge. Recordings are more reliable today than they have been in the past, but nothing can replace the knowledge learned from one generation speaking to another generation.

Motivation is an important reason to use digital media. Telling about themselves and their families can be fun for students because, as Sylvester and Greenidge (2009) say, “Everyone has a story to tell” (p. 287). By having my class take a picture and write about it, I wanted them to feel like they were telling about themselves in a way similar to telling stories. An important traditional value in many Western Alaska villages, including ours, is storytelling. Stories are used to teach life lessons and skills and they are used to entertain. When the students write to their pen pals, they are teaching their peers about themselves in a way that is fun and engaging for both participants.

Project Expansions

As I thought through all the possibilities of how I could use technology with my students, I planned on using additional tools. I realized through the implementation of my project that certain elements were not going to work this time around. As I continue to refine my process of implementation, there are things that I would like to do in the future.

During student Designing, it would be beneficial to focus more on using Task Based Language Learning activities. Ellis (2009) discusses how students focus on meaning and notice a gap in their understanding by accomplishing a task with a clear outcome (p. 223). This connects with what I want students to be doing through the assignments. To refine

the project, I would move away from using prompts with my students and form appropriate tasks for them to accomplish in their writing.

In light of The Redesign, it was my goal to have students produce something that could be shared with their pen pals. The easiest and best way to do that in my mind was through digital media. According to my original lesson plans, I wanted my students to use an iPhone app called ARIS that would place their pictures and writing onto a Google Maps platform that we could share. That way, our pen pals could use the technology available to them to see what was created (our Redesign) and have it be a new source of information (Available Design) that they would use to learn something about our context.

Even though this didn't work as planned due to limited availability of the necessary technology along with insufficient Internet coverage, the outcome was still meaningful. Students were able to learn new things and create artifacts that reflected their new understanding. I believe they grew in their ability to communicate with each other, their families, and their distant peers.

Conclusion

Throughout this project, I have learned a lot through reading and research as well as through the implementation. I have wanted to show community members that I value their insight, perspective, wisdom, and cultural values ever since I began teaching. It has been highlighted for me even more, being a white teacher in a Yup'ik village, that cultural values and language are still strong. This project helped me to feel connected to the families that I worked with in ways that phone calls home and weekly newsletters never achieved. Parents were able to participate with their kids in creating something for school. This

allowed me to have more conversations about what was going on in the classroom. Doors were opened for us to have encouraging conversations as well as difficult ones. The value in doing these activities is supported by the literature as I've shown here, but the additional value that I experienced was a connection to the families that had not been achieved in my previous teaching years.

One of the keys to feeling more connected with the community was being open with my phone number. Some people get a little wary of sharing their personal information with parents and students, fearing that pranks or late night calls will immediately follow. My experience was quite different. Relationships with students, parents, and families were strengthened as a result of being accessible.

As a final example of how the project produced positive results, I received an email two weeks after school got out for the summer. It was from a parent who had asked me questions about the project while it was going on but had not sent pictures for all the assignments. In his email was a picture of his daughter holding a puppy. He wrote out two sentences about the picture that his daughter had asked him to write.

I know that teachers have learning goals and may not often think about ways that students can carry out those goals outside of the classroom or the school year. Because of this project, one family continued to have conversations about things that were important to them and wanted to share that with me. For this student, writing and multimodal communication became a relevant and meaningful activity that extends beyond the classroom and into daily family life. She didn't write because of an assignment, but because she wanted to communicate something about her family with me.

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Week 1 – Home

Weekly Overview

During the five writing sessions, students will see examples of good writing. As the teacher, you have the opportunity to model how to write a sentence. Students will work with partners to learn about each other's homes. Students will also share the writing that they produce. As students write about their house, they will be sharing from their Funds of Knowledge.

Objectives

Content: Students will identify their home as a part of the community.

Language: Students will speak and write in complete sentences as they tell about their house.

Standards

AK: Social Studies: Geography

B. A student should be able to utilize, analyze, and explain information about the human and physical features of places and regions.

AK: Writing

W.2.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.2.5 With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

AK: Speaking Listening

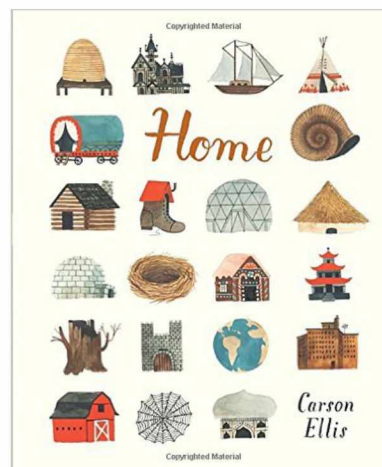
SL2.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL2.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

Literature

Connection:

Home by Carson Ellis



Time:

5 sessions

30 min. each

Focus Vocabulary:

Community

Adjective

Homework:

Text or email a picture and two sentences for this prompt: *Take a picture of you at home. You can show the outside or the inside.*

Day 1

Introduce the term **Community**. A Community is a place where people live and work. This week, the students will be focusing on where people live in a community.

- Read the book *Home* by Carson Ellis.
 - Think aloud as you read using descriptive words for each of the houses. Note that each house is different, but that doesn't mean one is better than others.
- Brainstorm words that describe a house. Write down student input on the board.
 - Encourage use of **adjectives** such as color, size, and shape words.
 - Make connections to any spelling or vocabulary words from reading curriculum.
- Give students time to draw a picture of their house.
 - Monitor students as they work by asking them about their picture. What color is your house? Who lives in your house? Where is your house?
- Have students tell a partner about their picture. Give praise when you notice students using complete sentences and using descriptive words.
- Choose two students who modeled descriptive sentences to share with the class.
- **Assign Homework:** Take a picture of you at home. You can show the outside or the inside.

I based this writing lesson off the second grade Social Studies curriculum. Writing across content areas was the most practical way of incorporating writing into the day. Using this mentality, these writing activities can be done using other content areas as well.

Second grade language arts curriculum teaches the use of adjectives. This activity reinforces the use of descriptors.

In order to get students talking and thinking about how to write, I've found it helpful to have them tell about something concrete, such as a house. After they have drawn something, you can ask questions and help the student think about other ways that they can tell about something they know.

Having students work with a partner gives them a chance to form their thoughts. For language learners, this is important because a peer who speaks the same first language can help them find the best way to say what they mean in the target language.

You should send home a letter* the first time you assign homework like this to explain what you are doing and provide contact information.

*See Resources for a sample letter.

Day 2

Show pictures that were turned in from the homework assignment and give students a chance to tell about their house to the class. Display pictures on an Interactive SMART board if you have one.

- Use Google Earth or Google Maps to find student houses in the community.
- Model proper writing skills. As students tell about their picture, write their sentences on the board. Talk aloud to model proper sentence mechanics.
- Print pictures that students turned in and hand out to students. They should keep them in their writing folder to use again throughout the week.
- Show a picture of a house on the board and have students write about it in their writing journal.
 - Example Journal Prompt:
“Please describe the house. What does it look like? Who might live in it?”
- Remind students to turn in their homework if they haven’t done so yet.

SMART boards are a wonderful tool to use in the classroom. If you don’t have one, you will need an alternate way of showing pictures and using Google Earth. There is value in having discussions as a class about where things are in the community. Students will get excited to find their house and will want to tell about it to their friends and teacher.

This is the day to be clear about expectations. If you notice students in class struggling with aspects of writing, you can highlight the correct way to write as you write sentences on the board. For example, during this time, I gave a mini-lesson on capital letters at the beginning of sentences. As I wrote my sentences on the board, I made sure to make mistakes and ask the class to find what needs to be fixed. Then I called on students that I knew needed the reinforcement and had them fix it on the board for me.

For the first writing sample, focus on helping students make a connection between what they said and what they write down.

Day 3

Review sentence structure and use of key **adjectives**: color, size, and shape words.

- Show students examples of good letters.
 - Explain what makes them good: Capital letters, punctuation, space between words, complete sentences.
- Have students re-read what they wrote the previous day to a partner. Have students circle adjectives that tell about the house.
 - As a whole class, ask what adjectives were found. Write down examples on the board. Give context by saying the word in a complete sentence.
- Students should check their partner's writing for capital letters and punctuation. Walk around as they do this to give support to partner pairs that need help.
 - Have students give a thumbs up when they have fixed all the capital letters and punctuation.
- Exit slip: Provide students with a half sheet of paper and have them turn in their response to the prompt when they are done.
 - Example Prompt: "Write two or more sentences telling about your house. Use at least 5 adjectives. Circle the adjectives you use."

This is a good time to show examples of good writing vs. bad writing. Highlight what makes one sample different from the others. Note: you make the samples.

As you review adjectives, it may be appropriate to re-read *Home* to get students to think about words they used when the lesson was introduced.

I've found it helpful to have students read out loud to a partner. They are able to hear how it sounds. They may not know what is wrong, but they often know if it doesn't sound correct.

Another fun way of having students find adjectives involves post it notes. Whenever they find an adjective, they can write it down and put the post it on the board next to others. This gets students moving around and allows them to see what others are writing.

Exit slips are a great way to get some formative assessment into the lesson. As you look at their responses, look for students that are still struggling with the concepts that have been taught. Make sure to talk to them during writing class the next day.

Day 4

Students are going to begin writing about where they live in their community. These letters will be sent to pen pals when they are completed.

- Begin by having students show their printed picture to a partner (from homework assignment) and tell about their house.
 - Model sentence starters such as:
 - The color of my house is _____.
 - My house is _____.
- In their writing journals, have students write more than two sentences about their house. Encourage them to write as much as they can.
 - Monitor the class and have students read their draft to you. Point out mistakes that can be fixed. Focus on adjectives, capitalization, and punctuation.
- At the end of class, have students turn in their journals. Go through what they have written and give written feedback. Tell students what they have done well and circle what can be done better.

Many students say that they don't know what to write. Having them tell someone about their picture before asking them to write is one way to make the connection between the two activities. My students struggled at times to understand that all I wanted them to do was write down exactly what they said out loud.

Some students will write quickly. Challenge them to write more than what is expected of them. I've also found it helpful to make these students "Expert Helpers." Their title gives them the chance to help others. Note: You have to be specific about how they help. It does not mean that they write for their friend. They can talk to them about their picture, but an "Expert Helper" doesn't need a pencil.

After this class, I collected student journals. It is important to have a system that works for you in this process. You want to be able to find their writing quickly, without having to search through the entire journal. I had students write the date at the top of the page and go in order from front to back.

Feedback is important! Otherwise they will continue to make the same mistakes.

Day 5

Today is the day to make a finished project. Have special template paper* ready for students.

- Hand back student journals. Have them fix any mistakes that you marked the day before. Circulate in the room to check all students understand your corrections.
 - Check to make sure mistakes are fixed before giving out the template paper.
 - Remind students to do their best work.
- When they are done, have them use the peer and self-assessment checklists from their writing folder.
 - They should put their finished product in their journal next to this assessment.
- Students are done when they have turned in their writing journal with their finished pen pal letter inside.
 - Direct students to look at the writing rubric in their folder. Let students know that you will use the rubric to grade their letter before sending it to their pen pal.
- Arrange a Skype visit with your pen pal class to let them know that letters will be sent to them soon. You can also have volunteers read their letter to the class as well.

This can be a fun and stressful day as students are trying to finish their work. It helps to have options written on the board for activities that they can do when they are done. I have students pick a book, do a word search, or finish old workbook pages.

Skype calls are motivating. My class loved to see their pen pals in another state, but they often got very shy and reluctant to talk when they were on camera.

As you use the rubric and give students a score for their work, keep in mind things that can be improved on and work toward improving those skills during the next writing activity.

Organization is essential at this point. Find a system that works for you. I needed to have the student's picture and letter on the left hand side and the rubrics on the right hand side.

*See Resources or Downloads for a sample template.

Resources

Sample Homework Letter, Rubrics, & Letter Template

Hello Parents!

This year, our class has been writing letters to pen pals in Michigan. We have been writing to them asking questions about where they live and telling them about Nunapitchuk. In their last letter, they shared pictures with us. Their students took pictures around their school and wrote to us about the pictures they took. I want to do that with our class.

Next week, we are going to be writing to our pen pals and telling them about where we live. Over the weekend, I'm asking the class to do a little homework. Please help them send me a picture of themselves at home. They can be outside the house or somewhere inside the house. With their picture, I want students to text me two sentences telling me about their house. In class on Monday, we are going to use our pictures to start writing letters to our pen pals.

If you have any questions about the homework, please let me know. Please text the picture and sentences to me at 907-XXX-XXXX.

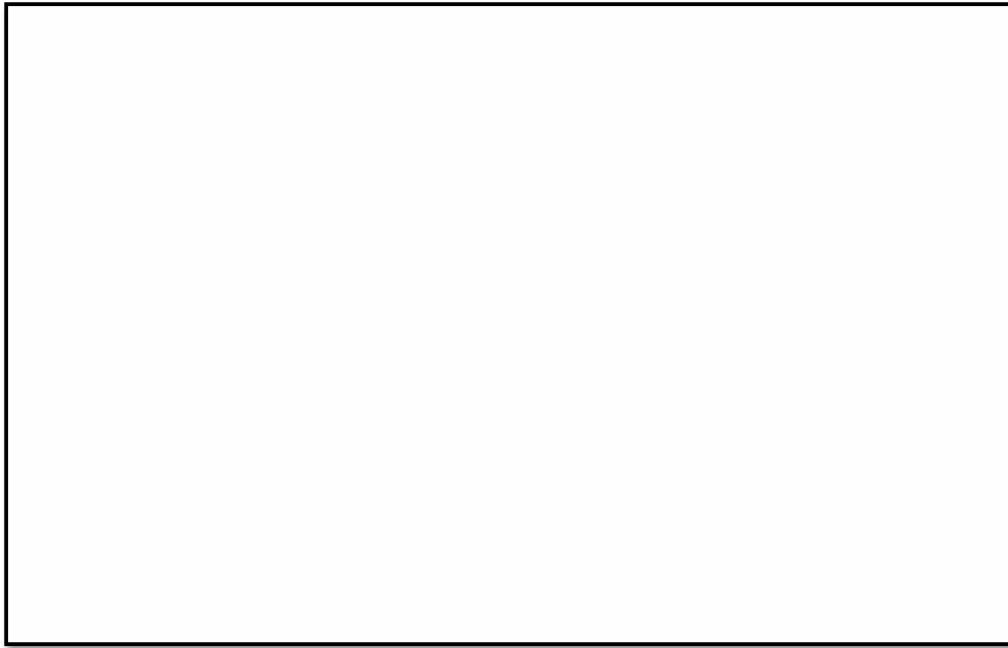
Thank you!

Mr. Brad

Self Checklist		
	Checklist items	After completing each step, put a check mark here.
Punctuation	I read my letter out loud to see where to stop or pause for periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and commas.	
Capital Letters	I checked for capital letters at the beginning of each sentence.	
	I checked for capital letters of proper nouns and I.	
Spelling	I checked to make sure that words are spelled correctly and circled any that I was not sure how to spell.	
Vocabulary	I tried to use new words in my letter.	

Peer Checklist		
Checklist items	After completing each step, place a check mark here.	Comments/ Suggestions
I read my partner's letter out loud so see where to stop or pause for periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and commas.		
I checked for capital letters at the beginning of each sentence.		
I checked for capital letters of proper nouns and I.		
I checked to make sure that words are spelled correctly and circled words that didn't look right.		
I read new words in my partner's letter.		

Writing Rubric				
	4	3	2	1
Handwriting	Awesome! I formed all of my letters neatly!	I did a good job most of the time.	I did an okay job but there were some mistakes.	I didn't do my best. It was too sloppy.
Capitalization	I capitalized all names, titles, places, and the beginning of sentences.	I used correct capitalization most of the time.	I had some correct capitalization in my letter.	I used no correct capitalization in my letter.
Punctuation	I have all of my punctuation.	I have most of my punctuation.	I put some punctuation in the wrong spot.	I have no punctuation in my letter.
Spelling	All of my words are spelled correctly.	Most of my words are spelled correctly.	Some of my words are spelled correctly.	None of my words are spelled
Vocabulary	I used 2 new words in my letter.	I used 1 new word in my letter.	I looked up a synonym for a common word.	I used only words that I know.
Finished Letter	I read my letter to a partner. It sounded good to them.	I read my letter to myself. It sounded correct to me.	I finished my letter, but didn't have time to read it again.	I didn't get to the end of my letter.

[illegible]

Week 2 – Communities are Different

Weekly Overview

Students will continue to learn about what makes a community. The focus for this week is on how communities are different. Students will learn about different ways that kids go to school around the world. They will also learn about different ways that kids play in communities. Through homework and classroom activities, they will write a letter to a pen pal from the prompt: What games do you play at home? Or What do you do with your family at home?

Objectives

Content: Students will identify an activity that they do within the community and compare it to other activities done in different communities.

Language: Students will speak and write in complete sentences as they tell about games they play and activities that they do.

Standards

AK: Social Studies: Geography

B.3 A student should be able to relate how people create similarities and differences among places.

B.4 Recognize similarities with people around the world.

AK: Writing

W.2.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.2.5 With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

AK: Speaking Listening

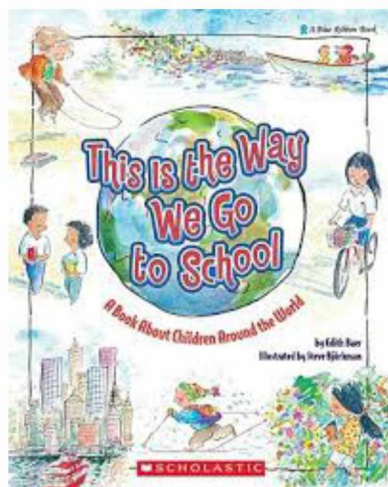
SL2.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL2.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

Literature

Connection:

This is the Way We Go to School
by Edith Baer



Time:

5 sessions
30 min. each

Homework:

Text or email a picture and two sentences for this prompt: *Take a picture of you playing games or doing an activity at home with your family. Tell what you are doing and who you are with.*

Day 1

Introduce the topic of differences in communities. Students will hear about how kids go to school and play in other communities. They will compare what they learn about other communities with how they go to school and play where they live.

- Read the book *This is the Way We Go to School* by Edith Baer.
 - Think aloud as you read about how students in other communities go to school. What would that be like?
- Brainstorm ways that students from the class go to school. How do kids from the book go to school? Write down student input on the board. Make observations about the similarities and differences.
- Give students time to draw a picture of themselves coming to school.
 - Monitor students as they work by asking them about their picture. Tell me about your picture? Who comes to school with you?
- Have students tell a partner about their picture. Give praise when you notice students using complete sentences.
- Choose two students who modeled descriptive sentences to tell the class about their drawing.
- **Assign Homework:** Take a picture of you playing games or doing an activity at home with your family. Tell what you are doing and who you are with.

This is a continuation of the Social Studies curriculum for second grade. Students learn about how communities are different. This week they will be seeing how people around the world go to school. They will then write about things that they do at home and make connections with their pen pals to recognize similarities and differences.

My class loved this book. Going to school for them looks very different than their pen pals. Many of them ride the bus, but my students ride 4 wheelers, snowmobiles, and boats to get to school.

This is a good week to focus on the use of singular pronouns. This skill is especially difficult for my students. Their first language, Yugtun, does not have an equivalent for gender specific pronouns, so *he* and *she* is a struggle.

Encourage students to share with others at their table about their picture. Listen to the type of language that they use during this informal time.

As with the first week, send home a note explaining the homework assignment and giving contact information.

Day 2

Students will look at pictures that classmates have submitted for homework. They will practice telling about their picture using pronouns *I, me, my*. They will also practice writing about a picture.

- Show student pictures that have been turned in by displaying them on the SMART board or projector screen in your room. Allow students to tell about their picture.
 - As they share, observe they are using the proper pronouns: *I, me, my*. If not, correct and show examples of proper use.
 - Print pictures students turned in and hand out to students. They should keep them in their writing folder to use again throughout the week.
- Show students a picture of yourself at home playing a game or doing an activity.
 - Model proper writing skills. Write two sentences on the board telling about what you are doing. Highlight the use of pronouns *I, me, my*.
- Have students write about your picture. Show how the pronouns change depending on who is telling about it. When they write, they will use the teacher's name instead of the pronouns.
- Remind students to turn in their homework if they haven't done so yet.

Celebrate when homework is turned in. In my context, it is not the norm for teachers to assign homework, so families don't expect it. It took many attempts to get families to participate, but the students who had pictures were very excited to talk about them.

My class was very interested in knowing more about me. Since they were sharing about what they did at home, I thought that they would like to see what I did at home. They loved talking about and writing about my picture. They also learned that I enjoy reading, so several of them wanted to read more.

This is a good opportunity for further mini-lessons. I chose to reteach spaces between words. I noticed several students putting their letters too close together. We used the strategy of putting a finger space between words to help see the space.

If students are not turning in their homework, you may want to ask them why. Some may not have the ability to take pictures and send them in. If that is the case, try to take their picture in class so that they have something to work with.

Day 3

Today is a good day for a review activity using pronouns *I, me, my*. Give examples of how to use other pronouns *he, she, they*. Students will be able to put what they review into action as they think about writing to their pen pals.

- Show students examples of good letters. Explain what makes them good. Show the use of pronouns, capital letters, punctuation, space between words, and complete sentences.
- Use Kagan strategy Quiz-Quiz Trade to practice saying what is going on in a picture. Students will say a sentence using a pronoun.
 - Quiz Quiz Trade- Each student will get a picture. Use magazine pictures or take pictures of students doing different things in the classroom.
 - They will then walk around the room to find a partner. With a partner, they will say a sentence about their picture, then their partner will say a sentence about their picture. When both students are done, they trade pictures and go find another partner. Do this for several minutes.
- Exit slip: Provide students with a half sheet of paper and have them write about the picture they had at the end of Quiz Quiz Trade.
 - Sample Prompt: Write at least two sentences about the person in your picture. What are they doing? Where are they?

Quiz-Quiz Trade is a Kagan activity. I use it a little differently than its designed purpose, but it is still helpful. The kids are not really quizzing each other so much as they are getting practice using oral language. By hearing a partner say a sentence about a picture, they have more background knowledge to pull from when they tell someone else about the picture.

I have seen students become very confident and willing to share during this activity. Even if they struggle in speaking and writing, they are able to do this well because of the support built into the activity.

Walk around and listen to sentences as students are talking. Give feedback when appropriate. I like to tell students when they use good sentences instead of telling them that they are doing it wrong.

Use the exit slip for formative assessment. Note which students are still struggling with pronoun use.

Day 4

Students are going to begin writing about what they do at home, based on the picture they took for homework. These letters will be sent to pen pals when they are completed.

- Begin by having students show their picture to a partner and tell about what they are doing.
 - Model sentence starters such as:
 - I am playing _____.
 - My favorite game is _____.
- In their writing journals, have students write more than two sentences about their house. Encourage them to write as much as they can.
 - Monitor the class and have students read their draft to you. Point out mistakes that can be fixed. Focus on adjectives, pronouns, capitalization, and punctuation.
- At the end of class, have students turn in their journals. Go through what they have written and give written feedback. Tell students what they have done well and circle what can be done better.

Students should be more familiar with the process of writing about a picture. For struggling students, have them dictate sentences about the picture while you write it out. They can copy what you wrote and see that it is just using their words.

Some students will write quickly. Challenge them to write more than what is expected of them. I've also found it helpful to make these students "Expert Helpers." Their title gives them the chance to help others. Note: You have to be specific about how they help. It does not mean that they write for their friend. They can talk to them about their picture, but an "Expert Helper" doesn't need a pencil.

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Feedback is important! Otherwise they will continue to make the same mistakes.

Day 5

Today is the day to make a finished project. Have special template paper* ready for students.

- Hand back student journals. Have them fix any mistakes that you marked the day before.
 - Check to make sure mistakes are fixed before giving out the template paper.
 - Remind students to do their best work.
- When they are done, have them use the peer and self-assessment checklists* from their writing folder.
 - They should put their finished product in their journal next to this assessment.
- Students are done when they have turned in their writing journal with their finished pen pal letter inside.
 - Direct students to look at the writing rubric* in their folder. Let students know that you will use the rubric to grade their letter before sending it to their pen pal.
- Arrange a Skype visit with your pen pal class to let them know that letters will be sent to them soon. You can also have volunteers read their letter to the class as well.

This can be a fun and stressful day as students are trying to finish their work. It helps to have options written on the board for activities that they can do when they are done. I have students pick a book, do a word search, or finish old workbook pages. If struggling students need more time to finish letters, allow for them to work on the letter during a break or other time in the day.

Skype calls are motivating. My class loved to see their pen pals in another state, but they often got very shy and reluctant to talk when they were on camera.

As you use the rubric and give students a score for their work, keep in mind things that can be improved on and work toward improving those skills during the next writing activity.

Organization is essential at this point. Find a system that works for you. I needed to have the student's picture and letter on the left hand side and the rubrics on the right hand side.

*See Resources or Downloads for a sample template and rubrics.

Resources

Sample Homework Letter, Rubrics, & Letter Template

Hello Parents!

This year, our class has been writing letters to pen pals in Michigan. We have been writing to them asking questions about where they live and telling them about Nunapitchuk. In their last letter, they shared pictures with us. Their students took pictures around their school and wrote to us about the pictures they took. I want to do that with our class.

This week, we are going to be writing to our pen pals and telling them about what we do at our homes. I'm asking the class to do a little homework. Please help them send me a picture of themselves at home playing a game or doing something with the family. They can be outside the house or somewhere inside the house. With their picture, I want students to text me two sentences telling me what they are doing in the picture. In class this week, we are going to use our pictures to start writing letters to our pen pals.

If you have any questions about the homework, please let me know. Please text the picture and sentences to me at 907-XXX-XXXX.

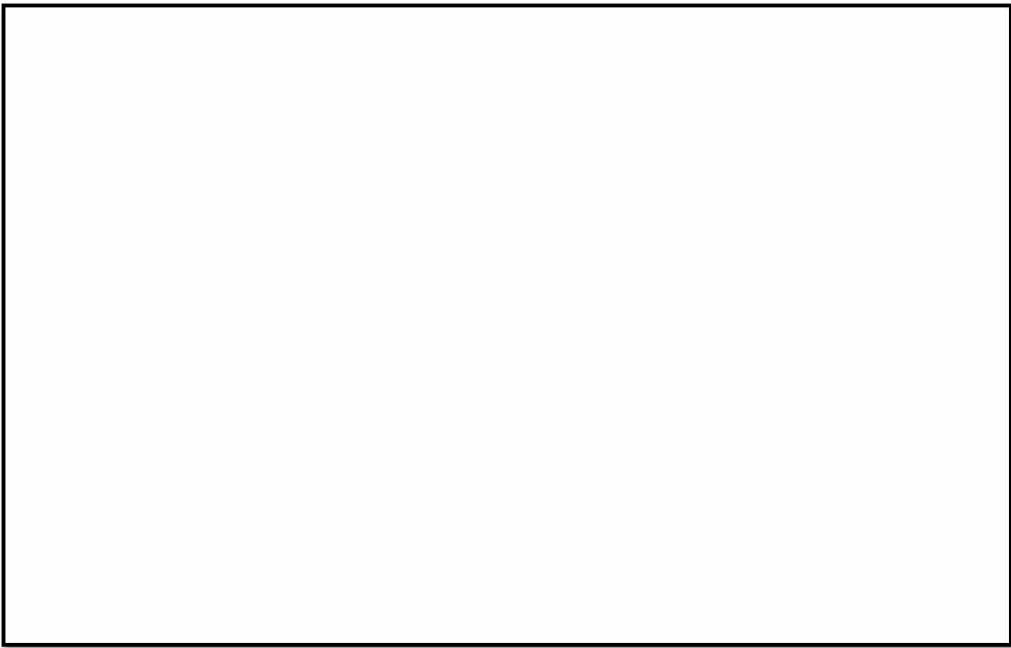
Thank you!

Mr. Brad

Self Checklist		
	Checklist items	After completing each step, put a check mark here.
Punctuation	I read my letter out loud to see where to stop or pause for periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and commas.	
Capital Letters	I checked for capital letters at the beginning of each sentence.	
	I checked for capital letters of proper nouns and I.	
Spelling	I checked to make sure that words are spelled correctly and circled any that I was not sure how to spell.	
Vocabulary	I tried to use new words in my letter.	

Peer Checklist		
Checklist items	After completing each step, place a check mark here.	Comments/ Suggestions
I read my partner's letter out loud so see where to stop or pause for periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and commas.		
I checked for capital letters at the beginning of each sentence.		
I checked for capital letters of proper nouns and I.		
I checked to make sure that words are spelled correctly and circled words that didn't look right.		
I read new words in my partner's letter.		

Writing Rubric				
	4	3	2	1
Handwriting	Awesome! I formed all of my letters neatly!	I did a good job most of the time.	I did an okay job but there were some mistakes.	I didn't do my best. It was too sloppy.
Capitalization	I capitalized all names, titles, places, and the beginning of sentences.	I used correct capitalization most of the time.	I had some correct capitalization in my letter.	I used no correct capitalization in my letter.
Punctuation	I have all of my punctuation.	I have most of my punctuation.	I put some punctuation in the wrong spot.	I have no punctuation in my letter.
Spelling	All of my words are spelled correctly.	Most of my words are spelled correctly.	Some of my words are spelled correctly.	None of my words are spelled
Vocabulary	I used 2 new words in my letter.	I used 1 new word in my letter.	I looked up a synonym for a common word.	I used only words that I know.
Finished Letter	I read my letter to a partner. It sounded good to them.	I read my letter to myself. It sounded correct to me.	I finished my letter, but didn't have time to read it again.	I didn't get to the end of my letter.



Week 3 – Good Citizen

Weekly Overview

Students will identify what a good citizen does in a community. They will make connections with what they can do at home to be good citizens. In addition to the social studies connection, students will learn new ways to reinforce their understanding of vocabulary terms. After building vocabulary, they will incorporate these words into their speaking and writing.

Objectives

Content: Students will identify what a good citizen does in a community. Students will define new vocabulary words to use in a sentence.

Language: Students will speak and write in complete sentences as they tell how they can become a good citizen at home.

Standards

AK: Social Studies: Geography

E.1 Describe what a good citizen is

E.2 Identify ways to be a good citizen

E. 4 Decide whether specific actions are those of a good citizen

AK: Writing

W.2.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W.2.5 With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

AK: Speaking Listening

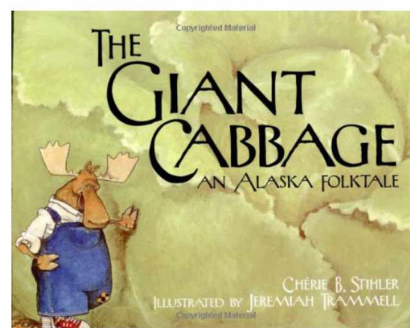
SL2.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL2.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

Literature

Connection:

The Giant Cabbage – An Alaskan Folktale by Cherie Stihler



Time:

5 sessions

30 min. each

Focus Vocabulary:

Citizen

Homework:

Text or email a picture and two sentences for this prompt: *Take a picture of you helping out at home. Tell what you are doing and who you are with.*

Day 1

Introduce the topic of differences in communities. Students will hear about how kids go to school and play in other communities. They will compare what they learn with how they go to school and play where they live.

- Read the book *The Giant Cabbage An Alaskan Folktale* by Cherie Stihler.
 - Think aloud as you read about what the characters in the book do that makes them a good citizen.
- Brainstorm ways that students can be good citizens at home. Write down student input on the board. Ask students to share ways that they can be good citizens at school. Make observations about the similarities and differences.
- Give students time to draw a picture of themselves being a good citizen.
 - Monitor students as they work by asking them about their picture. Tell me about your picture? What are you doing?
- Have students tell a partner about their picture. Give praise when you notice students using complete sentences.
- Choose two students who modeled descriptive sentences to tell the class about their drawing.
- **Assign Homework:** Take a picture of you helping out at home with your family. Tell what you are doing and who you are with.

I have incorporated the social studies curriculum for inspiration for each week. You can choose just about any topic that fits with your reading, social studies, or science curriculums.

This book has several animals that stop to help a neighbor who needs help getting ready for the state fair. They are examples of good citizens. An additional benefit of this book is the repetition. It is great for low readers and English Language Learners. It's also a great book to talk about synonyms.

As students share ways to be good citizens, make sure to highlight ways that this can happen in school. Use concrete examples. Have them say more than "Help a friend." Instead, they can say "I can help Nick put his books away."

This lesson could be used to help with behavior expectations in creating a helpful classroom atmosphere.

As students tell about their drawing, encourage them to say a sentence. Use sentence starters if needed.

For my students, helping out at home meant that they were helping with subsistence activities, many of which were not actually done in the home,

but were with and for their family.

Day 2

Students will look at pictures that classmates have submitted for homework. They will focus on using spelling words or vocabulary in a sentence.

- Show student pictures that have been turned in. Allow students to tell about their picture.
 - As they share, make connections to spelling or vocabulary terms as appropriate.
- Show students a picture of yourself helping at home or in the community. You could be doing chores at home such as washing dishes or cleaning the table, things that the students might do at home. Tell about what you are doing.
 - Model proper writing skills, including capital letters and using punctuation. Write two sentences on the board telling what you are doing.
- Have students write about ways that they can be good citizens at school. For example, helping another student do their work, helping the teacher clean the classroom, or working hard in class.
- Remind students to turn in their homework if they haven't done so yet.

English Language Learners (ELL) benefit from focused vocabulary instruction. Teaching new words and definitions helps in their comprehension during literacy activities and oral language exercises.

Be aware of what words your students comprehend. Don't assume that they know a word, just because you think it is an easy one. For example, I had a student who asked me what "him" was. I thought he was joking and began to laugh saying, "You know that word." By the look on his face, I could tell that I'd made a mistake and quickly adjusted my instruction.

This is a good opportunity for further mini-lessons. I have found that my class responds well to Kagan cooperative learning activities. Pick a Card is a game that I like to use. Students write focus vocabulary words on cards. As a class, come up with student friendly definitions to the words that they can write next to the word. They can then use the cards with a partner to practice saying what the word means.

Day 3

Do a review activity for focus vocabulary and other class vocabulary words. Students will have their picture taken as they act out a word. The pictures will be used in Comic Life to create a poster for the word.

- Review vocabulary from yesterday. Have students make flashcards for the words you want to focus on this week. Model how to write the word, spelling it correctly.
 - Once the students have written the word on their card. Use a dictionary or thesaurus to come up with a student friendly definition. Keep it short and simple.
 - When possible, have students act out the word. For example, for *woods*, I had the class stand behind their chairs and put their arms up to imitate being trees.
 - Take pictures as students do this and add them to a Comic Life template. Have students help write definitions and sentences.
- Use Kagan strategy Pick a Card to practice saying the word and definition
 - Pick a Card- Each student will have their vocabulary flash cards with definitions. Working with a partner, Partner A says, "Pick a card, any card." Partner B picks a card and reads the word. Partner A then says the definition written on the card. Then they switch roles.
 - To extend this activity, have students say the word in a sentence instead of saying the definition on the card.

- Exit slip: Provide students with a half sheet of paper. Have them write a sentence using a word from their cards.

Depending on how many words you are reviewing, students will have a lot of exposure to the words. For new words and definitions, this repetition is needed.

Comic Life is an easy to use program. If students have access to computers, they could create the posters themselves. My students did not make the posters themselves, but they loved posing for pictures and looking at the finished posters.

Pick a Card is a Kagan activity. I gave students a piece of construction paper and folded into 8 equal pieces. I use the terms hamburger fold and hot dog fold to explain how to fold the paper. Students can then cut out each piece to make a set of flashcards that they can use.

Walk around and listen to sentences as students are talking. Give feedback when appropriate. I like to tell students when they use good sentences, instead of only

telling them they are doing it wrong.

Use the exit slip for formative assessment. Note which students are still struggling with using vocabulary words correctly.

Day 4

Students are going to begin writing about what they do to be a good citizen. These letters will be sent to pen pals when they are completed.

- Begin by having students show their picture to a partner and tell about what they are doing.
 - Model sentence starters such as:
 - I am helping my family _____.
 - My chore is _____.
 - I like to _____.
- In their writing journals, have students write more than two sentences about what they do at home to help. Encourage them to write as much as they can.
 - Monitor the class and have students read their draft to you. Point out mistakes that can be fixed. Focus on capitalization and punctuation.
- At the end of class, have students turn in their journals. Go through what they have written and give written feedback. Tell students what they have done well and circle what can be done better.

Students should be more familiar with the process of writing by week 3. For struggling students, have them dictate sentences about the picture while you write it out. They can copy what you wrote and see that it is just using their words.

Some students will write quickly. Challenge them to write more than what is expected of them. I've also found it helpful to make these students "Expert Helpers." Their title gives them the chance to help others. Note: You have to be specific about how they help. It does not mean that they write for their friend. They can talk to them about their picture, but an "Expert Helper" doesn't need a pencil.

After this class, I collected student journals. It is important to have a system that works for you in this process. You want to be able to find their writing quickly, without having to search through the entire journal. I had students write the date at the top of the page and go in order from front to back.

Feedback is important! Otherwise they will continue to make the same mistakes.

Day 5

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